

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Chile

**Post:** Santiago

### Chilean Prune Production Consolidates World Wide

**Report Categories:**

Dried Fruit

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**Report Highlights:**

Prunes (dried plums) continue to win space in the Chilean fruit export basket. In 2011 prune exports were almost the same in value as plums.

**General Information:**

From 2001 to 2010 the volume of world exports of prunes rose 72 percent to 216,524 tons. The main exporting countries are the United States, Chile, Argentina, France, Netherland and Germany. Within this scenario Chile's exports are also growing and capturing market share. According to recent information given by the Ministry of Agriculture (ODEPA), Chile is the main exporter in the southern hemisphere with shipments reaching in 2011, 59,966 tons, valued at US\$112.3 million. These nearly 60,000 tons accounted for about 30 percent of total world exports during last year.

Last year (CY2011), world exports of fresh plums totaled US\$130million, prune US\$112 million and prune juice US\$12 million. For the first 6 months of 2012, exports of prunes expanded another 30 percent in volume, when compared to the same period of last year, exceeding 27,000 tons and its value increased 22 percent, totaling about US\$49 million. The main markets for prunes are Mexico (15%), Russia (14%), Germany (10%) and Poland (8%). With this projections Chile could, at the end of this season, export a total of over 78,000 tons which would make Chile the largest prune exporter worldwide.

According to Chilean industry officials, the prune industry does not adequately service the domestic market. Since producers today export 98 percent of total production, they indicated that the remaining 2 percent is not enough to get product known for domestic consumers to create a demand for it. They think that the sector should publicize the benefits of the product and seek more marketing opportunities and generate a domestic demand. Especially because in the medium term, global production will exceed consumption which makes it essential for the industry to work towards creating and/or increasing a domestic demand as an alternative for the export market. In this sense prune producers have taken a first step in approaching the local market by including prunes as a processed product and snacks in a program sponsored by Healthy Living. To strengthen the local and export market they also have recently created the brand: "Prunes from Chile".

Nevertheless, the industry expressed that the export market has still a large margin for growth, as China's demand alone calls for an expansion of over 130,000 tons in the coming years. Consumption in Sweden, also mentioned by the industry, grew 11 percent in 2011, for which Chile supplies between 38 to 44 percent of their imports.